

# share a challenge

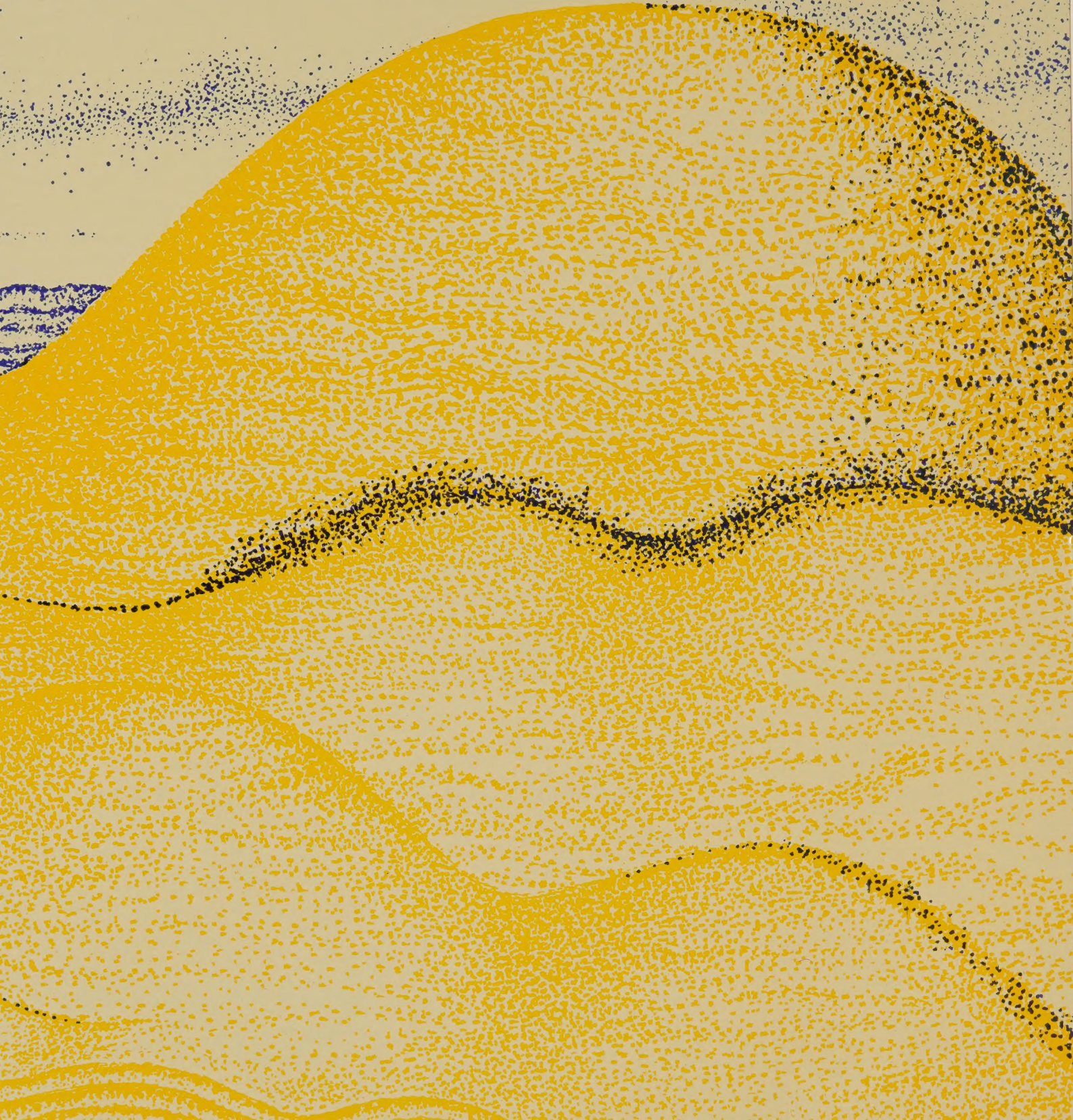
Wasaga  
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Community

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# share a challenge

Wasaga  
Recreation  
Community

September 1974



Ontario

Ministry of Treasury  
Economics and  
Intergovernmental  
Affairs

The Honourable John White minister  
The Honourable Donald Irvine minister without portfolio  
A. Rendall Dick deputy minister



Ont. Ministry of Treasury, Economics and  
Intergovernmental Affairs.  
[General publications]  
[G-3/]

# this booklet

is a guidebook. It's designed to give up-to-date information about the Wasaga Project, to help you evaluate progress to date, and start you thinking about the future of your town.

The project is past the mid-way point of a five-year period for which funds were allocated in July, 1971. The apparent changes may seem small, but the work done in the last three years has laid the foundation for many programs which we will be examining here.

Now is the time, then, to pause and take stock.

How much of the project is finished? How successful is it so far? How have people reacted? Are the decisions made in 1971 still appropriate in 1974?

Finally, and most important, what should we do next?

These are the kinds of questions we will try to answer here, and we welcome your reactions to our effort.

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# flashback to 1971

goes briefly back to July 1971 to describe some of the objectives of the Ontario Government's plan announced at the time and how people reacted to it.

It also describes the changing roles of government—provincial and local—at Wasaga and how people can participate in the area's development.







*How will  
our new town  
grow?  
Wasaga's  
planning board  
is busy  
finding out*

## the master plan

The master plan for Wasaga Beach announced by Premier Davis on July 22, 1971, climaxed two years of work by local authorities and the provincial government.

It described the area around Wasaga Beach as it could be 15 or 20 years later with planned development. It envisaged parks along the beach and on the rolling inland dunes, carefully planned communities separated by open space, urban-style services such as sewers, water and roads, an improved business district and better community facilities. In short, a very different Wasaga from what it had become by the early sixties.



## early priorities

Master Plan 1971 estimated that by the 1990s, Wasaga's permanent and seasonal residential population would be about 35,000—three times what it is now—while the peak-day visiting population would increase to about 60,000.

For the first phase in developing the recreation community, the plan proposed:

- making substantial improvements to the beach park, including more parking areas;
- purchasing and developing land for the park links and the dunes;
- some residential development in areas where sewers are not needed or where they will be installed soon;
- improving commercial and tourist facilities;
- preparing an official plan and adopting land use controls for the entire community; and
- improving traffic circulation in certain problem areas.

Basically, then, the overall project calls for co-operative action by the province and local authorities on three fronts—recreational development, servicing and planned community development.

To realize some of these objectives, the Ontario Government allocated \$18.5 million to be spent in the next few years on land acquisition for parks, park development, road improvements and the installation of a communal sewer and water system.



## public reaction

People had a great deal to say about Master Plan '71. Some felt it emphasized local wishes too much. Planners, they claimed, should have paid closer attention to the needs of overheated Torontonians looking for a beach base on hot summer weekends.

In its own assessment of the Wasaga area, the planning board of the day expressed concern about unstructured growth, inefficient use of land and disregard for Wasaga's natural assets. The board also had a land use plan of its own.

In substance, the plan reflected the land uses proposed in Master Plan 1971, but with significant differences in emphasis. The planning board felt the government's master plan catered too much to day visitors to the detriment of residents and holidayers, and based its own proposals on people who stayed in the area longer.

In the board's view, the priorities should go to the preparation of an official plan, another bridge across the Nottawasaga, highways to bypass the congested spit area, water and sewers, and a scenic route along the shoreline—in that order.

The land acquisition program has not been popular. When the project started, people were not sure about the acquisition areas, the government's purchasing methods, and whether or when particular properties would be purchased. They were also critical of new facilities—some of them temporary—in the proposed parks.

Many others did not see the proposed changes taking place quickly enough and, with at least six ministries involved in the project, it hasn't been easy for residents to follow the many facets of the government's involvement. This has led more than once to misunderstanding, confusion and frustration.



## master plan to official plan

Since the publication of Master Plan '71, people have also been confused about the respective functions of the Ontario Government's plan and an official plan to be prepared and adopted by Council.

Master Plan '71 was meant as a general guide to Wasaga's future—not a final solution to the area's problems. It represented the starting point for more detailed work by the Ontario Government and discussions with the local authorities to find out, for example, whether certain capital works were feasible, at what densities certain residential areas should be developed and what facilities should be provided in the parks.

The official plan goes further. It is a document that is formally adopted by Council and expresses the community's intentions over a long period of time. It deals with issues affecting the entire area, such as servicing and utilities, the distribution of population, the general pattern of land use, and community needs such as commercial and social facilities. It provides a framework for preparing detailed plans and sets out guidelines for controlling land use, pointing out special priority areas, ways to deal with them and when; since the sequence of development may be critical to carrying certain policies through.

Once approved, the official plan becomes binding on public authorities. No public works may be carried out that don't conform to it. Thereafter council cannot pass by-laws that conflict with it.

Finally, it describes the means that should be taken to bring planning issues before the public so that they can be informed about and involved in the decisions that affect them. For planning is based on the values that people prize for the town they wish to live in; on the natural amenities, the economy, social needs, and on the constraints and opportunities posed by the existing pattern of development.









*New challenges  
for new town  
are posed  
at inaugural  
ceremony  
by Mayor  
Clair Robertson  
and Ontario  
Treasurer  
John White*

## new roles

Who does what in Wasaga Beach? is a question that many people have asked since the project was first announced. Some programs are being implemented by the Ontario Government, while others, like local services, are the responsibility of the municipal council. Since 1971, the structure of government has changed at both the provincial and local level, making it difficult for people to orient themselves and play a more active part in shaping the area's future.

# Ontario government

One of the first tasks facing the Ontario Government following the announcement of Master Plan '71 was that of getting its own people working together to achieve the objectives that had been set. The difficulty of this task was compounded at the time because the structure of government itself was undergoing substantial change. The functions and responsibilities of many ministries were revised to meet changing responsibilities and needs, and some also changed their names—for example, the Department of Lands and Forests became the Ministry of Natural Resources.

The task of drawing together the staff of the various ministries to be involved at Wasaga was assigned to the Ministry of Treasury, Economics and Intergovernmental Affairs. In addition to a co-ordinating role in the project, the Ministry administers the project budget and also provides liaison between the town council and the various ministries on project business. Its further responsibilities at Wasaga include advisory services on local government practice and planning problems.

Names and functions of the other Ministries involved in the implementation of the Wasaga project include:

Ministry of Natural Resources	<i>park planning, development and administration</i>
Ministry of the Environment	<i>design &amp; construction of sewer and water system—waste management, environment assessment</i>
Ministry of Transportation and Communications	<i>highway planning, design and construction</i>
Ministry of Government Services	<i>land acquisition</i>



Ministry of Industry & Tourism	<i>advisory services, regarding tourist priorities and development</i>
Ministry of Housing	<i>advisory services and approval of local plans and subdivisions</i>
Ministry of Community and Social Services	<i>advisory services on recreation development</i>

## local government

The organization of municipalities in the Wasaga area has changed in the past year. The project area boundaries originally included the Village of Wasaga Beach and parts of the Townships of Flos, Sunnidale and Nottawasaga.

Some change was needed in the area's four-part administration to unite an area oriented essentially to recreation into a single unit and to resolve the two-way problem of having four independent municipal governments, each with its own local concerns, negotiating with the provincial government and its agencies.

Three possible ways to unite the local administration were considered: a joint planning board of the four municipalities, provincial administration through a committee, and—the alternative chosen—the creation of a single municipality out of the relevant parts of four.

Legislation to establish the new municipality by January 1, 1974, was introduced and enacted by the Ontario Legislature in June 1973, and elections for the new council were held that October. The legislation has given the former Village of Wasaga Beach the status of a town and jurisdiction over an area of twenty square miles. Its council has been enlarged from five to seven members.

Council is responsible for administering the town and for providing services, including such things as garbage collection, the maintenance of local streets, the enforcement of building by-laws and fire protection.

## planning board

Because of the strong emphasis on planning, one of the busiest agencies in Wasaga's local government is the town's planning board. The Planning Act empowers the board, which reports to council, to prepare an official plan for the new town.

It won't be an easy job. The former village and the Township of Flos didn't have approved official plans, although both had zoning by-laws.

Sunnidale has an approved official plan in effect (including the area now incorporated into Wasaga Beach), but the document will need refining to take into account work recently carried out by the province on parks and transportation planning.

The part of Nottawasaga Township incorporated into the new town has been exempted from Nottawasaga's official plan, but is still under a zoning order that was applied to the township by the provincial government to prevent further development prior to the preparation of an official plan.

At the request of council, project staff have been helping the board to gather some of the basic information that is needed before intensive planning can get underway—information about the physical, economic and social conditions of the area.

The next stage will be the preparation of the plan itself when issues will be brought up for discussion through planning meetings, newspaper articles and meetings with local interest groups, such as senior citizens and ratepayer associations.



## public involvement

Having defined the roles of the provincial and municipal government, it is just as important to point out the role of the public in planning the future of their community and, here, each individual has a responsibility and a role to play.

Both the provincial government and municipal government at Wasaga recognize the need for more public interest and involvement in the affairs of their community. Council and Planning Board have committed themselves to incorporating the views of the community within the official plan it has responsibility for preparing.





# progress to 1974

brings together the information that will form the basis of programs to be implemented at Wasaga in the coming years—the parks, the services, the roads and, above all, the people who will be at the centre of this change.





## Wasaga today

A community is people. One of the prerequisites of preparing plans for growth is a thorough knowledge of who lives in the community and how peoples' lives will be affected. This involves digging beyond the census statistics to find out what people have to say about the area they live in, their surroundings, and how growth will affect their way of life. It also means the adoption of interim planning controls to ensure that excessive growth does not precede the construction of services and facilities.

During the past two years staff from the Ministry of Treasury, Economics and Intergovernmental Affairs have worked closely with Council and Planning Board to determine means of developing the community so that the transition will be sensitive to peoples' needs. Here are the results of some of this work.

## the community

The heart of the community at Wasaga is the permanent residents. They provide the facilities and activities for the other groups. They provide the municipal leadership. And to a large extent, they provide shape and direction to Wasaga Beach—what it is and what it will be.

In 1961 the permanent population of Wasaga Beach was a mere 500 persons. Now in 1974, it is approximately 3,400. During the same period, the area known as Wasaga Beach has grown twice: in 1966, from a village of about one square mile to one of six square miles; and on January 1st, 1974 to a town of over twenty square miles.

The permanent residents at Wasaga include more senior citizens than in most other Ontario communities its size. Former cottagers in the area have chosen Wasaga as a place to retire and many houses have been converted from summer occupancy to year-round occupancy, often by making major improvements to the dwelling.

The land-owning population includes many cottage owners—some 6,000 according to the 1973 voters' list. The average cottager at Wasaga spends seven weeks a year at his cottage, including 11.2 weekends, about one fifth of the annual weekends. He's there mainly during the summer, but if his cottage is winterized he may come for some winter weekends too.

The majority of these people (55 percent) live in Metropolitan Toronto. Nearly three quarters of them (72 percent) come from the area which includes Toronto and the urban corridor from Hamilton to Oshawa.

Most of the remaining quarter come from Cambridge, Kitchener and Waterloo (207 people; 2 percent) Collingwood (147 people; 2.3 percent), Guelph (73 people; 1.1 percent), and Barrie (68 people; 0.9 percent).



## haven't we met?

While they may flee the city to get away from it all, cottage owners still tend to group together as if they had never left.

In Wasaga, for example, residents from Cambridge, Kitchener and Waterloo are concentrated in the Oakview Beach area, Collingwood residents at Brocks Beach and Barrie residents around Flos Beach.

Among Metro Toronto residents, those from the newer areas such as Mississauga, Scarborough and Etobicoke are more likely to be found in Nottawasaga, Flos and the area south of the river, while those from the older Metro areas such as Weston, Downsview and Willowdale are more numerous in the more central parts of Wasaga Beach.

Almost three quarters of the houses in Wasaga are owner-occupied. The majority (87 percent) are single-family homes. Two mobile home parks, which together include about 60 units, are a new form of housing here and there are a few small apartment buildings.

## the commercial structure

Master Plan 1971 recognized the importance of developing commercial and tourist facilities to keep pace with the growing community.

Tourism is the life blood of Wasaga, and there are some serious challenges ahead for the commercial sector. The highly seasonal nature of the town's tourist trade is at the base of many of the problems. Building and land costs are high these days and a two-month return on investment does little to encourage new development.

Recreational demands have changed. Wasaga has not.

Unattractive strip-commercial development along major traffic routes causes congestion, is unsafe and makes shopping inconvenient. Barrie and Collingwood, each only half an hour's drive away from Wasaga, already offer a greater variety of restaurants and stores.

The downtown mall area has physically deteriorated and this area, being the visible centre of the town, creates a negative image of Wasaga to the entering tourist. The shops here don't offer a range of goods catering to a wide enough group of people.

Since many of the permanent residents take their vacations between December and February, the resident population is cut back even more during the winter. This further reduces the incentive for storeowners to remain open year-round.

The financial tax base of a municipality rests on the assessment value of property. An often-quoted norm for a healthy and viable community is that commercial or industrial assessment should compose 30% of the town's revenue. Wasaga has no industry. In 1974 commercial assessment counts for under 12% of the revenue. Residential assessment makes up the rest.

The present commercial operations, therefore, do not encourage large investment by developers. The future installation of water and sewers are no guarantee that this will change. Local businessmen must take the initiative in redeveloping their mall area and improving tourist services and accommodation.

## communications

The community in Wasaga has been exposed more than most to Ontario Government activity. Soon after the project was under way, the need was seen to clarify various programs for the public and to obtain some reaction to them.



The new communications program was more than a routing measure to dispense yet more information. It was a genuine long-running commitment to involve Wasagans in the community's future. Before the cars were banned from the beach, for example, a publicity campaign was worked out to promote Wasaga Beach as a people park, not a car park.

A pamphlet showing where the new parking lots were located was distributed at Wasaga and at stopping points on main routes into the area. At the same time, a poster-brochure describing Master Plan 1971 was published and the community-oriented newsletter SUNSPOT introduced and mailed to residents. An information trailer was installed during the summer of 1973 at the Wasaga mall. Over 10,000 people visited the trailer to see the exhibition and to obtain information from the staff there. The trailer was re-opened in June 1974 with a new exhibit and theme, *A New Town faces New Challenges*.

In 1974 the Ministry of Natural Resources also opened a visitor centre in park area 5 to provide information about the proposed parks, the area's natural environment and as an activity centre.

## what people think

To learn more about what the people felt should be done, project staff used the information trailer in 1973 as a contact for filling out two questionnaires, one for residents and cottagers, the other for vacationers and day visitors.

Wasagans were asked what sort of tomorrow they wanted for their community and what they thought about certain changes. Here's how they rated the alternatives:

□ Most desirable was the idea of a combined park and community serving permanent residents, seasonal residents and tourists.

- The next preference was for a park-like community composed largely of permanent residents.
- Third was an expanded commercial resort town providing more services than at present.
- Fourth was a cottage community.
- Fifth and least desirable: the Wasaga of cars on the beach.

As for specific changes, the most popular among Wasagans themselves was the removal of cars from the beach: 90 percent agreed with this change.

Opinions on beach parks were less clear. Many wanted the parks, but at the same time a sizeable number opposed removing cottages and tourist homes to create them.

Another question covered the priority Wasagans would give to changes.

Most wanted the summer traffic congestion on Mosley Street cleared up first, and this highlights the need for early construction of the Schooner-town bridge and other improvements to traffic circulation on the spit.

After improvements to the traffic situation, local people wanted better shops and more parking space near them.

As for tourists and visitors, better accommodation and more convenient parking were most important to this group, followed by better stores, better pedestrian access to them, and better entertainment facilities.

The changes that most disturbed them were the deterioration of the beach cottages and the fouling of parts of the beach by the black muck.

These concerns point up the fact that the two-way communications efforts must continue until the project becomes part of the day-to-day experience of those living or visiting here.



## interim planning controls

Master Plan 1971 is really a set of broad planning guidelines for the province and the town to follow until a local official plan is prepared. In the interim, some orderly development is being permitted before water and sewer systems are in full operation.

Ground water tests have shown that much of the new town has a high water table—particularly a wide band of land south of the Nottawasaga River between Highway 92 and the oxbow of the river. This area is suitable for development once serviced although presently water can be seen standing on the ground surface in many places.

The firm that did this study, Ainley & Associates Limited urged that where septic tank systems are impractical, development be permitted only if piped water and a central sewage treatment facility are available.

Where the tanks can be used, the consultant recommended a minimum lot size for a single-family house of 20,000 square feet—about half an acre.

For other uses, such as shops or businesses, the minimum standard should vary to suit individual sewage disposal requirements.

The lot size used to be 15,000 square feet and developers, understandably, weren't too happy with the new larger standard. But septic tanks need enough land for all the sewage leaving the tile field to be properly treated in the soil before it reaches a property boundary or a water-course.

The study also noted increasing indications that 15,000 square-foot lots don't ensure acceptable sanitary conditions after prolonged operation of the septic tank system.

Because of the awkward mix of local municipal controls, this policy has been hard to administer. Developers submitting subdivision proposals often found that the local controls had to be amended to accommodate their plans and this usually discouraged them from going ahead.

The controls were reduced in 1973 to allow single-family homes to be constructed on existing lots of 15,000 square feet. This was done mainly in response to a shortage of building lots in Wasaga.





*The problem  
with these  
lovely fragile  
backland dunes  
is to enjoy  
them without  
destroying them*

## a special park

Although Wasaga Beach has been a provincial park since 1962, Master Plan 1971 gave that park a unique role. The idea of a multiple-use provincial park surrounded and penetrated by areas of permanent, self-governing community is practically unheard of in North America.

## a special environment

A detailed study of Wasaga ecology and history carried out by the Ministry of Natural Resources points up some significant features about the proposed parkland.

The main environmental concern about the popular beach area is whether it can continue to be used so extensively without damaging it. So far there is little sign of degradation from day users although this could change with mismanagement.

Natural changes in the water level of Georgian Bay are a problem on all the local beaches. High water submerges parts of the shore and limits the number of people who can use it.

The parallel sandy ridges of the raised beach area extend from the Nottawasaga Bay south to the dunes. As development proceeds here, care must be taken not to change the level of the water table so that the vegetation cover remains unharmed.

The fragile dunes are a significant provincial resource. There are only three other systems like them in Ontario and all are starting to show signs of deterioration. The Ministry of Natural Resources has acquired most of the dunes area to preserve it and make it available for recreation.

## the history

To many people, history at Wasaga Beach is just as important as nature. There are more than 20 archaeological and historical sites that represent important aspects of Wasaga's past.

The studies by Natural Resources of ecology and history defined areas

of particular interest, not only for preservation but so that they could become part of a program to help visitors understand and appreciate the park.

For instance, archaeological records relating to early settlement led to a salvage excavation in 1973 of the site of Fort Nottawasaga, the supply depot that marked the first European settlement at Wasaga.

A small park commemorating the site of the fort has already been planned and will be developed once the proposed Schoonertown bridge is built.

Beginning in 1973, the Ministry of Natural Resources assigned staff to develop programs—recreational and educational—for park visitors.

## muck on the beach

From the Nottawasaga River comes a black, organic matter that periodically fouls the beach during the summer.

Microscopic examination reveals the stuff to be partially decomposed leaves and wood introduced into the bay through the Nottawasaga and carried by currents to the beach. The “muck” problem, then, is an intricate natural phenomenon that we will have to live with.

## where to develop?

Three major studies have been carried out in the Wasaga area by the Ministry of Natural Resources to investigate how well it can accept different forms of recreation.



One study concluded that neighbouring Flos Beach should be designated as part of the park system, and this 3.5 mile stretch of fairly stable shoreline was recently granted to the Ministry of Natural Resources to maintain the beach.

The report proposed a two-year plan for setting up the basic facilities needed for supervision, maintenance and sanitation followed by the establishment of beach parking facilities. Some small areas of land may be needed for comfort station locations.

Another study, done last winter, looked at the effect of snowmobiling on the Wasaga environment—particularly on the dunes south of the Nottawasaga River.

Noting the damage that this activity could cause without controls, the study recommended that the province point this danger out to snowmobilers. If education doesn't work, said the report, tracked vehicles should be excluded altogether from ecologically sensitive places.

A third study, carried out in the summer of 1973, examined the feasibility of locating developments such as campsites and trails within the dunes area. Results to date have shown that many parts of the dune system are extremely fragile and unable to withstand any development at all. Although hikers won't be excluded from these parts, the trails will go around, not through, them.

## the emerging park

Although much of the park is still in the planning stage, some development programs have already started.

For years, that long stretch of hard-packed sand has been an irresistible lure to cars, dune buggies, trucks, motorbikes—even airplanes. By

1971, the beach was so cluttered with parked vehicles that sunbathing was becoming hazardous.

That same year, nature itself stepped in. High water levels at Wasaga made it necessary to close some parts of the beach to traffic. Experimental pedestrian areas set up at six locations along the beach that summer proved quite popular.

During the 1972-73 winter, the idea of a total ban on beach traffic was studied by the councils of Wasaga Beach and Nottawasaga Township and the province.

After evaluating parking patterns on and near the beach, the study recommended that cars be kept off permanently from 1973 onwards.

This was done successfully in 1973. Temporary parking facilities were set up for 2,300 cars at key locations beyond the shore.

## land for parks

Land acquisition has been one of the greatest hurdles to carrying out the park development program. Understandably, some owners were reluctant to sell their property and, in 1972, the village council said that property acquisition was eroding the tax base.

Council also objected to the proposed park boundaries, claiming that the Ontario Government's land requirements were unnecessarily large.

Finally, the Council felt that some land purchased for park development along the beach should eventually be redeveloped by private business for tourist and commercial purposes.

The tax loss problem was investigated by the Ontario Government and, based on the improved inventory, an upward adjustment was made in

the payments in lieu of taxes to the town for those properties purchased by the province.

The government also reviewed its land needs along the beach and agreed with Council that some of this land was not required for park purposes. It was also agreed that two blocks of park land in Area 2 near the town mall would be made available for new commercial development when Council felt the time was ripe for expansion to take place.

Nearly all of the property in three of the six proposed parks along the beach (Areas 1, 2 and 5) and more than half of the land in areas 3, 4 and 6 has been acquired by negotiation.

Expropriation procedures were necessary in beach area 1 to complete the purchase of property and to enable the Ministry of Natural Resources to develop recreation facilities. Meanwhile, about 70% of the 2,500 acres needed for the dunes area has been bought.

There's still concern about the land acquisition program and the government's need to continue with the acquisition and clearance of land in the beach areas.

The proposed parks are intended to satisfy a variety of recreation requirements. The amount of space required in a park depends on whether people will be active or inactive or whether they are alone or in a group.

One person does not require as much space for sitting or sunbathing as for a more active sport played by a group of people, such as volleyball. A sunbather might be comfortable with 20 square feet of beach, but a bocce game requires at least 700 square feet and a volleyball court at least 1500 square feet. Having satisfied these needs one must then provide space for comfort stations, change houses, pathways and car parking.

At Wasaga car parks will be planned to occupy only 25% of the space in each beach area. The rest of the land will be available for recreation.



## special projects

As land acquisition is virtually complete in beach areas 1, 2 and 5, the development planned for these areas can proceed.

Projects scheduled for Beach Area 1—the eastern end of the spit—include improving the boat launching site, more landscaping, and constructing the first part of a board walk. A creative playground for children and picnic shelter are designed for construction shortly.

Park Area 5—6th Avenue to 10th Avenue—will have a complete park. For 1974, this area will take on a community park atmosphere with a visitors centre, playground, new comfort station, some pedestrian paths and special landscaping.

The other areas are still in the planning stages until land acquisition is complete, although some restoration work will be done where there are signs of environmental damage.

## managing the park

Natural Resources administers the park from its Wasaga office. During the summer a staff of more than 95 is needed to run it. In 1974 for example, five people handle general administration and 40 look after maintenance. There are 19 on beach patrol, 18 on the gates, 5 on security and four working on education programs. The group also includes civil engineers and surveyors.

In the off season, this large complement can be cut back to just eight or ten people, but it's expected that more staff will be required year-round once the dunes area is developed.

## Proposed Serviced Areas & Contract Phases

PROVINCIAL SEWAGE WORKS PROGRAM  
& WATER WORKS PROGRAM STAGES I & II

- Reservoirs
- ▲ Well Systems
- Sewage Pumping Stations
- Area Serviced (Stages I & II)
- Contract Phase I (Stage II)
- Contract Phase II (Stage II)
- Contract Phase III (Stage I)
- Contract Phase IV (Stage I)
- Contract Phase V (Stage I)
- Contract Phase VI (Stage I)
- Contract Phase VII (Stage I)
- Contract Phase VIII (Stage I)

## Proposed Roads 1975

- Schoonertown Bridge & Dunkerton Extension



## servicing Wasaga

Proposals for constructing a municipal water supply and sewage system in Wasaga assume that the recreation community will one day support a permanent population of 10,000 persons and a seasonal population of 25,000.

On a peak visiting day there would have to be recreation facilities, hotel accommodation and camp grounds for an extra 50,000 to 70,000 visitors.

Without the system, today's community couldn't expand because of the high water table, adverse soil conditions and the risk of pollution from septic tanks.

If the bathing area were to become contaminated, Wasaga would lose its reputation and most of its recreational appeal.



## the sewage works

Briefly, the proposed water and sewer system is being designed to serve the parks, the existing community and the areas to be developed.

The sanitary sewers are being sized to accommodate the expected growth and range of uses forecast in Master Plan 1971.

The design chosen is a modified activated-sludge process where air is bubbled through the sewage or vigorously stirred into it. This makes it break down quickly into inoffensive materials.

Although the plant is being designed to handle the sewage flow expected in 1991, this doesn't mean the optimum plant has to be built all at once. It will be constructed in sections to allow some flexibility for coping with community growth.

The site for the sewage treatment plant is located south of the former race track near River Road West.

## the water works

During its ground water investigations, the Ministry of the Environment found two promising water-bearing deposits of sand and water (aquifers) in the area. One is next to Powerline Road South of River Road West, the other at Jenetta Street near the mouth of the river.

To get maximum yield from the aquifers, two wells will be dug into each with a total daily flow (for design year 1991) of 3,700 gallons per minute.

Heavy pumping within this limit shouldn't affect the ground water, which will need only chlorination and perhaps minor treatment to remove iron.

There will also be extra water capacity for fire fighting, and since Wasaga is planned as a low-density resort development, this protection was designed for a "worst case" situation of many small fires starting up at once.

## storing the water

Since about two million gallons of water storage will be needed, two one-million gallon reservoirs are proposed.

The high ground of the raised sand dunes suggested an easy way to get the pressure needed for the water supply. A storage reservoir built on high ground would deliver water under pressure to a town on low ground, and it wouldn't require the strong supporting tower of an elevated water tank.

The two reservoir sites chosen—at Sunnidale Road and Ansley Road—are in almost ideal locations in relation to wells and elevations.

In normal use, each well system will operate with its partner reservoir: the Powerline Road wells with the Sunnidale Road reservoir, and the Jenetta Street wells with the Ansley Road reservoir. A connection would permit the two systems to work together in emergencies.

## surface drainage

There are enough outlets in Wasaga for good surface water drainage but existing ditches and culverts are in poor condition.

According to the consulting firm of Ainley & Associates, they need deepening and improvement, and in most cases adequately sized pipes need to be installed. The consultants also observed that any subdivision plans will have to be carefully reviewed for proposed drainage.

Where possible, then, to promote good runoff, new subdivision streets should be laid out so that they cross the contours at a small angle, and culverts should be sized according to the runoff.

The consultants recommended some maintenance and inspection measures and stressed that the rights of way needed for the various outlets should be acquired as soon as possible, either by easement or by purchase.

## the next step

The detailed design of the sewer and water system is already underway and will be completed this year. The next stage prior to the construction of the system is administrative and will involve negotiations between Council and the Ministry of the Environment to review the finer points of the system and the costs to community. Once agreement in principle has been reached over the concept, an agreement will be drafted by the Ministry of the Environment for further execution by Council.

If the form of the agreement is satisfactory, Council will establish the method by which annual charges are to be recovered from users. The by-laws associated with the agreement will then be forwarded to the Ontario Municipal Board for its approval and, if necessary, the Board will convene a public hearing to ensure that the costs can be borne by the municipality without impeding its capacity to undertake other programs.

Construction will start only when all of these approvals have been obtained.

The timing of the program can therefore be affected by the length of time spent by Council in dealing with the proposal and also by the time required to obtain the approval of the Ontario Municipal Board. The process could take from six months to a year.



With the necessary approvals, it is anticipated that a start will be made simultaneously on the sewage disposal works and on the sewer and water mains in the Oakview area. The water wells will also be drilled and the first water storage tank built in the dunes alongside Sunnidale Road.

Contracts for the construction of the sewer and water mains in the remaining areas will be timed so that there is virtually no construction on main roads during the busy summer months of July and August. It will take a little longer to build the system in this way, but engineers are optimistic that the whole system can be built and in operation within three years of receiving the necessary approvals to proceed.

## financing the program

If the sewage and water works are to proceed at Wasaga, financial assistance from the Ontario Government will be required. The financial assistance program for municipalities is administered by the Ministry of the Environment whose financial guidelines provide a grant of up to 75% of the gross capital cost of the sewage and water works that comes into effect when the charges per typical home are in excess of \$130 per year for sewage service and \$110 per year for water service.

Another important saving that will apply at Wasaga is that the capital costs of the system directly attributable to the provincial park will be excluded from the Ministry of the Environment's rate calculations.

Homeowner charges for Wasaga Beach have not been calculated and will depend on more detailed information being available to Council and the Ministry of the Environment regarding the effect that special users in the community will have on the overall rates submitted by the Ministry.

Special users are those who utilize more or less of the service than the single domestic unit. Common examples would be motels, laundromats, restaurants, service stations, bars and beverage rooms.

The structure of homeowner charges that has been recommended to Council is made up of three elements:

### frontage charge



A charge based on a homeowner's assessed frontage (X¢ per foot).

This is payable annually by all homeowners whose property fronts on a sewer or water main whether or not they hook up.

### connection charge



A connection charge of X¢ per year, determined by the length between the homeowner's property line and the sewer or water line.

The charge can be paid either in one lump sum or spread over several years.

All homeowners must pay regardless of whether they hook up or not.

## user charge

Payment for the day to day use of the system.

Individual charges to be worked out by Council once the annual costs of operating and maintaining the system and the fixed charges for the capital cost of the system that is not subsidized are available.

All users could be charged either one flat rate or charged by the amount they use the system.

Homeowners not connected are not charged.



## homeowner charge for water and sewer services





Surveyor  
adjusts  
his transit  
at site for  
Schoonertown  
bridge

## roads for Wasaga

On a peak Sunday in 1990 it is estimated that up to 100,000 internal automobile trips may have to be handled within the recreation community's boundaries. This means an efficient traffic distribution system will be needed here to avoid congestion.

## serving the town

By the mid-1980's, should demands justify, motorists headed for Wasaga from Metropolitan Toronto may well be travelling a new Highway 26.

To reach the town, one of the convenient turn-offs could be a new provincial collector—the proposed Eastern Access Road—linking the new Highway with the Midland area.

As now visualized, these roads will offer excellent access to Wasaga Beach. They will also provide a convenient by-pass for traffic bound for Owen Sound, Collingwood, Midland and Penetanguishene.

One of the major conclusions of the Ministry of Transportation and Communications is that the new east-west Highway 26 will require at least four lanes to distribute traffic to recreation areas.

Briefly, the proposed highway will give access to the town by way of Stayner Townline Road, Sunnidale Road, Powerline Road and the proposed Eastern Access Road.

Stayner Townline Road and Sunnidale Road serve the west end of the town and are in relatively good condition. By serving the eastern end of the town, the proposed highway will help relieve the traffic on Highway 92, which will be carrying the heaviest flows within the community.

## the Schoonertown bridge

In the more immediate future, the first priority will be the construction of a second bridge across the Nottawasaga River—something for which



some people have been waiting a long time. When built, the bridge will enable motorists to use River Road West to by-pass congested areas on the spit and as an access route from one end of Wasaga to the other.

After looking at four possible sites, the choices for location for the Schoonertown bridge were narrowed down to two.

One was to extend Powerline Road by building the crossing at Joan Avenue, and this would have the advantage of providing an extra beach-access road.

On the other hand, the only way now to get to the beach from River Road West and the Oxbow area is to take the Main Street Bridge (a most indirect route), so building the bridge to join River Road West and Mosley Street at Sunnisdale Avenue was seen as a better alternative.

The bridge has now been designed and construction will begin when all of the necessary land has been bought. A small park will also be developed nearby to commemorate the historic significance of the site.

## other priorities

The major road improvements envisaged after the construction of the bridge and the installation of sewer and water pipes will be the improvement of River Road West from the new bridge to Highway 92 to accommodate the increased traffic load.

North of the river, Dunkerron Avenue will be extended west to 1st Avenue to improve the flow of traffic along the spit. In addition, inefficient—and potentially dangerous—dog-leg or T-intersections will have to be straightened out into standard crossings.

## further ahead

The construction of an alternative route to River Road West may be necessary in the future as cross town traffic flows increase. This four-lane highway would be built in a line parallel to River Road West between the dunes area and the river access to it being limited to well-spaced intersections and the houses along it, would face away from it.

The route of this highway requires careful planning in that its construction will affect the area's natural environment, the design and layout of the proposed housing areas to the south of River Road West, and the provision of recreation facilities in the dunes area.

Some work has already been undertaken to assess the impact of the proposed highway upon the natural environment and upon uses envisaged in the area. This and further work will be incorporated into the town's official plan process.





## influencing change

Implementing the programs described in this section will definitely change the way of life at Wasaga. Some people will welcome this change. Others will find the adjustment difficult.

The first real change will follow the installation of sewer and water services. This will unlock the potential of undeveloped areas, bringing in more people, new housing, new social and commercial facilities.

Other effects of this will be that:

- ☐ more summer cottages will be winterized, providing more year-round business.
- ☐ new possibilities will be open to businessmen to expand other facilities.

Likewise, the continuing development of parks will attract more visitors, many of whom will want to stay longer to enjoy the variety in services and facilities. This means that tourist attractions may stay open for longer seasons.

When Master Plan '71 was prepared it was assumed that the community might grow at an average of 7% per year once development started to take place. This means an increase of 700 permanent and seasonal residents or 22 new or winterized homes in one year. The accumulated increase at this rate over 5 years means 3,500 more people and about 110 new or winterized homes. It means that Wasaga's permanent and seasonal population will be a quarter the size larger than it is today.

The question townspeople must ask themselves is whether or not this is an appropriate rate of change, or whether the scale of development has to be faster or slower. When will it be necessary for a new school to be opened, or will most of the newcomers be senior citizens with a different set of community needs?

These are questions that the town's planning board will be considering as part of its up-coming official plan program.

A flexible planning program can accommodate and control change that takes place on the ground. But the approaches that people themselves adopt to cope with change, their attitudes and responses, are much more complex.

Still, of the many choices available, the best approach would seem to be to maintain an interest and participate in what is going on around you.

Wasaga's recreation community is being designed for people. You can make it work by becoming part of it.





## the outlook

moves into the future and offers some ideas that will have a significant effect on the shape of the recreation community as it grows.



Wasaga  
riding  
party  
follows a  
wilderness  
trail

## planning for leisure

Recreation as we know it today will change swiftly in the next few years. As leisure time pursuits take up more of our lives, people are looking for something different to do.



Today's young people are not bound by the recreational conventions of their parents.

One characteristic of this trend is the demand for a sense of involvement and self-fulfillment in recreation. Escaping to nature, for instance, is becoming more important to the families of the 'seventies, and so is the need to become involved in the past and in things past.

Satisfying this need for self-fulfillment may mean that our natural resources will have to be augmented with man-made attractions—attractions such as golfing or boating or outdoor dancing.

Wasaga caters mainly to people at leisure, whether they are on holiday or retired, and the changes that are taking place present a real challenge for those who want to develop the area's human and ecological resources.

The major challenge for the public and private sector in Wasaga over the next 70 years will be to expand without harming the area's natural assets, to turn the highly seasonal tourist industry into a year-round business, and to satisfy new and changing recreational needs.

As new pursuits are introduced, old ones tend to lose their appeal.

Snowmobiling, for example, was virtually unheard of eight years ago. Today it's a major sport.

Cross-country skiing was once the pastime of the adventurous few, but it's now increasing in popularity as fast as snowmobiling was a few years ago.

But people musn't lose sight of the fact that these new activities can disappear as quickly as they arrive.

To be competitive, Wasaga must be creative. While it's important to preserve the best of the past in today's activities, it's just as important to develop a variety of new attractions, natural and man-made, that will appeal to people of many life styles and interests.







*New  
development  
should blend  
with old  
to give  
Wasaga a  
distinctive  
character*

# the growing community

The future of Wasaga hinges on what people want to do with their leisure time. And while the town must change to keep pace with changing interests, it must still maintain an identity of its own. To do this, it has two built-in advantages working in its favour.

One is that it has a unique natural environment which attracts people.

The other is that it traditionally has been a meeting place for people from all walks of life, and with a little determined planning it should be able to maintain that tradition.

## some basic objectives

The official plan is Wasaga's most powerful tool for enabling local government to widen the scope of its responsibilities. As a policy document, it has the means of keeping the entire range of community developments—housing, shops, social facilities, roads, utilities—in perspective.

Those policies have to be designed to achieve the objectives the community sets for itself. How about these?

1.  
Wasaga should have a distinctive character that can easily be recognized by those who live in and visit the area.
2.  
Each new residential area should be substantially completed before the next is started. All development should be planned to cause a minimum of inconvenience to residents and visitors.
3.  
Businessmen should be encouraged to broaden the range of Wasaga's facilities and improve the quality of services.
4.  
People and cars don't mix. Planning should keep residential areas free from through traffic and still give residents convenient access to stores, highways, recreation and social facilities.
5.  
A clearly defined system of residential streets, local roads and highways must be planned to give access to the recreation community, and safe, efficient movement within it.

Now, consider some details.



## the housing market

Housing and associated facilities take up substantial land in Wasaga. New homes will follow water and sewer mains as they open up new land. Construction of new homes here will depend on other factors—such as the cost of developing the site, the cost of building, and the market value of the houses.

These will be determined by the quality of the site, the construction methods, and the drawing power of the housing market in Wasaga.

The growing trend to year-round recreation will have a profound effect on Wasaga's popularity. It will also influence the design and development of the residential areas.

New cottages will be more solidly built than the older ones and they will be used more often. In time, it will be hard to tell the summer cottage from the home.

## variety in homes...

As for houses, they could vary in layout and density from single-family and semi-detached dwellings to townhouse clusters and low-rise apartments in park-like settings. No high rises are envisaged.

There will likely be more rental dwellings or condominiums. The condominium could become as popular in Wasaga as it is in other North American and European resort areas.

Mobile homes and modular housing units are likely to be in demand as leisure dwellings. Properly planned and serviced, they offer a relatively inexpensive accommodation, more easily financed than the conventional cottage.

The mobile home has met more than its share of opposition as a member of the residential community. The key to success is in getting them accepted as fully planned communities near to shops and recreation, and spaced far enough apart to keep density low. In this case, planning also means setting aside enough land for siting and servicing, as well as for landscaping and, if necessary, screening them from neighbours.

## ...and in planning

Ideally, every major housing area should include many kinds of housing densities to suit a broad range of tastes. Developers must be encouraged to design these areas in harmony with the recreation community's natural and man-made surroundings.

Open space and play areas interspersed among the neighbourhoods must be designed to suit the needs of the people using them.

Whatever the type of development, the approach should be realistic. The new neighbourhoods of Wasaga Beach must be built in planned stages so that the municipal services and community facilities serving them won't be overburdened.

## the businessmen

Increasingly, visitors come to Wasaga in the winter. Snowmobilers, skiers and vacationers are faced with a lack of services, shopping areas, restaurants and entertainment. Collingwood and Barrie benefit from these visitors' shopping dollars. The potential exists to develop new facilities for changing tourist demands.

Today's families are on the move all year round. Wasaga should become a full recreational resort, and this takes initiative and creativity by the

local businessmen. A series of events scheduled for fall and spring months, supported by local activities will draw people from all parts of Ontario.

Shops should offer a diversity of goods, for innovation appeals to today's travellers. Local crafts, arts, sporting goods and unusual items would do well in Wasaga.

Promotion of a "new Wasaga" would bring new life to the commercial area.

## business objectives

There are certain objectives that expanding communities generally adopt for guiding commercial development and attracting business. Among them:

1.  
Shops should be grouped together to provide a range of retail services in the same general location. To stay competitive, existing shopping areas usually need some redevelopment to match expected trends in community growth.
2.  
Business areas should be near major traffic routes and accessible to major residential and recreational areas.
3.  
Safety and convenience are the keynotes of good retail design. Cars should be kept away from pedestrians by building walkways to recreational and residential areas and by locating car parking around the periphery of the shopping area. Developers themselves can help make shopping more pleasant by doing some landscaping and by selecting construction materials that blend with natural surroundings.

4.

Today's successful retail centres are more than simply places for buying things. Business opportunities improve when the centres include recreational and social services (such as children's play and babysitting areas) and informal meeting places.

## moving people about

By 1991, the year for which the proposed transportation system is being planned, will people be using private automobiles as much as they do today? Will there be plenty of fuel or will there be a shortage? What will holidayers expect, or demand, of transportation then?

Predicting the travel habits and transportation technology of the future is a risky business at best, and this is perhaps the compelling reason why the proposed system for Wasaga will need periodic review. The projected highways, for instance, may have to be reduced and other ways considered to move people about.

One alternative to roads and private cars within the recreation community would be a public transit system linking residential areas, parks and other major local attractions.

This would relieve traffic congestion in the busiest visitor areas and encourage people to move freely from one attraction to another since they wouldn't have to worry about parking at their destination.

But a public transit system is expensive. Any feasibility study would have to look closely at locations for residential and recreational areas, for shopping centres, car parks, major access routes, rights of way, river crossings, the demand for public transit (considering the seasonal changes in Wasaga's population), and the cost of alternatives.



## community objectives

A community is more than houses, shops, parks and roads. It relies on satisfying people's needs, and community objectives are just as important as the hardware.

The most important considerations can be grouped into three categories:

### 1. character

Each neighbourhood should be set off from the others by its distinctive design and landscaping. Suburban uniformity—strawberry-box houses, each with a two-car garage and one maple tree—isn't for Wasaga Beach. People with different lifestyles will want different surroundings.

### 2. safety

Safe pedestrian access to neighbourhood open spaces and shopping centres is particularly important for children and senior citizens.

### 3. privacy

Even in high-density developments, householders need to be guaranteed some acceptable level of privacy and this can be managed by, say, landscaping (buffering with trees and hedges), private courts, or by designing and siting homes to share common courtyards.

Community policies are also needed, for example, for schools, community centres and medical facilities to keep pace with the growing town. While these facilities are needed primarily for permanent residents, they will also be more in demand by seasonal residents (who will be doing more visiting in cold weather) and by senior citizens.

## a school for everyone

The number of children will also increase as the town expands and attracts more young families. This means that the official plan will have to take into account the location of more schools.

Increasingly, today's schools are being planned not only as an educational facility but as a social centre for the community it serves.

The school auditorium could be ideal for community plays and concerts and the gymnasium and playing field could be used for many kinds of neighbourhood recreation from badminton to baseball.

On a larger scale, the community could capitalize on the uniqueness of Wasaga's natural and historic legacy. A program of special courses could have wide appeal for both adults and children—and not just for Wasagans exclusively, but for people from other municipalities.

Social policies and objectives need even more review than physical ones. The challenge is to accommodate the changing needs of all age and interest groups—residents and visitors alike—and a flexible, farsighted planning process should be able to anticipate these changes and adopt appropriate policies to deal with them.







*This creative  
playground  
gives children  
something  
constructive  
to do while  
they have fun*

## the growing park

The plan for the proposed provincial park at Wasaga will parallel the official plan for the municipality. It will list goals and objectives and the policies planners will use to reach them. It will be reviewed often to make sure it keeps abreast of the changing needs of people.

One of the earliest criteria established for the overall park was that it should be easily accessible to all, by either foot, cycle or car, but the circulation pattern must be designed to keep these modes of travel apart. (About a quarter of each beach area will be used for car parking.)

Because of the two components—the beach areas and the dunes—different parts of the overall system will require vastly different treatment.

## distinctive parks

The challenge in planning the individual beach parks is to convey to users that, despite their varying designs, they are all united closely to one another and to the community they embrace.

The dunes must be developed more gently and they're particularly suitable for certain forms of winter recreation such as cross-country skiing and snowmobiling. Developing this potential could help expand Wasaga's tourist season beyond the short summer.

The narrow open-space corridors joining the beach parks and the dunes should prepare the visitor mentally as he moves from the active recreation of the beaches to the relative solitude of the backlands.

To be distinctive from other provincial parks, the park at Wasaga will have its own identifying logo and will try to express its character through the form and style of its recreation and the architecture of its buildings.

## creative playgrounds

Each of the creative playgrounds will be designed around some aspect of Wasaga's heritage—a marine theme at the point and a lumbering format in Beach Area 5.

Distinctive graphics will help highlight the special character of each recreation area. Information about the history and natural significance of an area can be conveyed by murals, supergraphics and other displays that inform while they establish a pleasant mood.

Just as important, the park and the community must compliment each

other. Properly developed, the park will help make the town more aware and assured of itself as a special place to live and visit.

## save the terrain

Park planners hope that the work at Wasaga will set new standards for rehabilitation as a way to add to a recreational asset.

Some parts of the park have deteriorated through past development. Where vegetation has been stripped away, it'll be replanted. Where the terrain has been defaced by bulldozing for a now-abandoned project, the original contours of the land will be restored.

## early warning system

Less than a decade ago, the word environment had only incidental meaning to the general public. The result has been the destruction of irreplaceable resources and the creation of significant natural imbalances, with serious consequences for the present and the future.

Today, both the public and the government realize that the environment has certain limitations, that our natural resources are indeed interdependent, and that the misuse of one can cause great harm to others.

Poor controls at Wasaga Beach led to overdevelopment and all its consequences. Fortunately, Wasagans came to realize that an early warning system is needed before any major public and private development can begin so that the area could grow in harmony with nature.

In September 1973, the Ministry of the Environment published a green paper on procedures for environmental assessment. The paper set out

guidelines for finding out what harm, if any, a project is likely to do to a given environment while there is still time to take preventative measures, or even stop the project altogether.

The assessment looks at the undeveloped site first—at its special natural systems and how they affect one another, its geography and topography, and at any distinctive amenities it may have, such as a rare plant species, say, or some irreplaceable wilderness quality.

Then it matches up this inventory against the proposed project to see what ecological and visual impact it will have on the area.

## perils of tampering

Can a development affect an area all that much? It can, indeed. Here, for instance, are just a few of the implications of tampering with a natural environment.

### **Remove top soil before construction**

Left bare during construction, exposed subsoil is more susceptible to erosion than top soil (which contains roots and other binding organic matter) and is carried away by surface runoff to the nearest stream.

### **Remove sand from the dunes, or fill them in**

Vegetation will change and certain trees and shrubs will be eliminated.

### **Remove attractive natural amenities such as trees and plants**

You destroy the scenic view and upset the balance of the natural systems. Clearing forests and wooded lands, for instance, can increase erosion many times.

It isn't too late to include some form of environmental assessment in planning Wasaga Beach. The fresh insight provided by this kind of approach will also make people more aware of their total environment.







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LAKE MICHIGAN MARINA

*Popular  
Nottawasaga  
Canoe Race  
could be part  
of annual  
festival  
attracting  
tourists*

## tourism: a new start

Tourism today is a major Canadian industry. People are now able to travel further afield for their vacations and they expect—and demand—higher standards in services and facilities.

Ontario's tourist industry is developing swiftly to meet these needs. But unlike other areas, Wasaga Beach hasn't been participating in this expanding and promising field.

The basic problem at Wasaga is a combination of two factors: first, a lack of those tourist attractions that people are now looking for and second, the highly seasonal nature of existing operations.

## it works elsewhere

Successful tourist areas develop attractions to cater to different moods, styles and pocketbooks. The operators of these facilities take pains to make sure that attractions and events are planned over as long a season as possible.

Special attributes of an area—natural and historical—are utilized to create uniquely local innovations in commercial enterprises. If buildings, for example, can contribute to the tourist program, they are modernized. If they can't, they are replaced by new ones.

Tourist facilities can't co-exist in isolation from one another or from attractions in the surrounding regions. People require more than one attraction to visit while on a family vacation. With today's mobility, people want to see and experience more on holidays than they ever did in the past, so the successful tourist area will offer attractions that are imaginatively designed and quality services that are accessible.

## it could work here

Applying the few criteria outlined above to Wasaga Beach, it isn't difficult to realize that with few exceptions, the quality of Wasaga's tourist attractions hasn't remained high.

The diversions people have come to expect in a resort aren't available here on days when the weather keeps them off the beach.

Tourist accommodation is often vacant. The peak season lasts only two months—July and August—and rooms are filled weeks and weekends only from July 15 to August 15.



In the off-season, Wasaga stores offer only basic retail services so that Wasaga residents themselves must do much of their shopping out-of-town in places like Collingwood and Barrie. A growing permanent population will need these services in town, and so will the growing number of seasonal residents who are converting their cottages for winter use.

## getting started

To halt the decline in the commercial sector at Wasaga, it will be important at first to improve basic retail services, then introduce new tourist attractions to support and supplement this growth.

More retail and service outlets should be established to serve the town's permanent population. The initial development could be accommodated in the business district between Bay Street and Joan Avenue. Later, as the permanent population approaches 8,000 to 10,000 a new shopping area will be needed.

New business development should court cottagers. While cottagers don't always provide enough business to meet the year-round expenses of merchants, this problem can be partly overcome through marketing know-how.

The mall, for instance, could expand in summer with inexpensive additions and scale down in winter.

Better quality merchandise could be offered with an emphasis on hand-crafted goods unavailable in big-city department stores.

The same sales area could also make multiple use of space by showing snowmobiles in winter and other recreation equipment in the summer.

In fact, to get more volume than present operations, any new tourist establishment will have to be different from the others.

## events to start

The responsibility for succeeding in the tourist market rests primarily with the townspeople.

In an area so promising, the business community should seek to find attractive ways to capitalize on this tourist market. A few examples:

### Wasaga Fair

The community already holds an annual fair each summer at the Oakview Community Centre. Today's fair attracts only permanent residents, but a more ambitious production along the lines of the Huronia Festival of the Arts could have great drawing power for tourists.

### farmers' market and auction

City dwellers are intrigued by the chance to grocery-shop away from the supermarket. A weekend farmers' market like the one held at Elmvale might entice the day visitor to do his shopping locally.

### handicrafts

High-quality handmade leather goods were in great demand in Wasaga in 1973 and sold well. Surely this interest in custom-made quality would warrant setting up a shop where customers watch demonstrations of leather craft, glass blowing, woodcarving and other crafts.

### special festivals and anniversaries

The town would be an excellent setting for an annual festival with, say, an ethnic theme or one commemorating some historic event. Whatever the theme, a festival featuring such attractions as a float parade, concerts, an outdoor barbeque, boat races and fireworks on the lake would have nostalgic appeal for the city dweller.

### music

Holidayers, especially, seek out music and Wasaga has the potential to cater to a range of tastes from country-and-western to classical. The

coffee house with local folk singers, for instance, is still a popular musical outlet. Many visitors surely would enjoy hearing classical music—played live by small groups or even recorded—in a park setting.

## ice skating

A stretch of the Nottawasaga River could be kept smooth during the winter for ice skating, and illuminated after dark. Benches, a comfort station and a hot-drink stand could be set up nearby.

## apres-ski entertainment

Since Wasaga Beach is near the downhill slopes of Collingwood, it could become a favourite place to relax after a day's skiing. Hoteliers would profit from a second season, and so would other businesses that chose to offer extra activities for skiers.

## selling ideas

At first glance, the ideas just outlined for helping to capture a larger share of the regional tourist trade may seem overwhelming. But these and many other ways to win friends and influence outsiders have likely occurred to members of council, local service clubs, residents, cottagers and visitors.

Promotion is essential to the success of any effort to develop tourism. In Wasaga, it should be aimed at visitors to hold them longer; at cottagers, boaters and prospective owners of vacation homes, to encourage them to invest in the district; and at businessmen generally, to persuade them that Wasaga Beach can offer an exciting and diversified environment for their goods and services.

This is a major challenge facing the town of Wasaga Beach in the days to come. Success depends on imagination and enterprise—and more than a little daring.

# now it's your turn . . . share a challenge

In this booklet we have provided you with some very basic information about the range of programs that have been studied and initiated at Wasaga during the past three years.

Two levels of government have the responsibility for carrying out many of these programs—the Government of Ontario and the Council for the Town of Wasaga Beach.

The provincial government is responsible for developing the parks, improving some of the main roads and constructing the sewer and water services.

The Council for the Town of Wasaga Beach is responsible for administering the town and providing local services such as garbage disposal, fire protection and road maintenance. The Planning Board is a group of councillors and citizens appointed by Council to advise on planning matters and will prepare an official plan for the town.



The ultimate success of a program rests on the degree of interest that people take in their community. Having read this booklet, if you have any comments or reactions to what is included here, then make them known to us at:

**Wasaga Recreation Community  
Project Development Group  
56 Wellesley Street West  
Toronto, Ontario**

or contact Wasaga Beach Council and Planning Board at:

**Town of Wasaga Beach  
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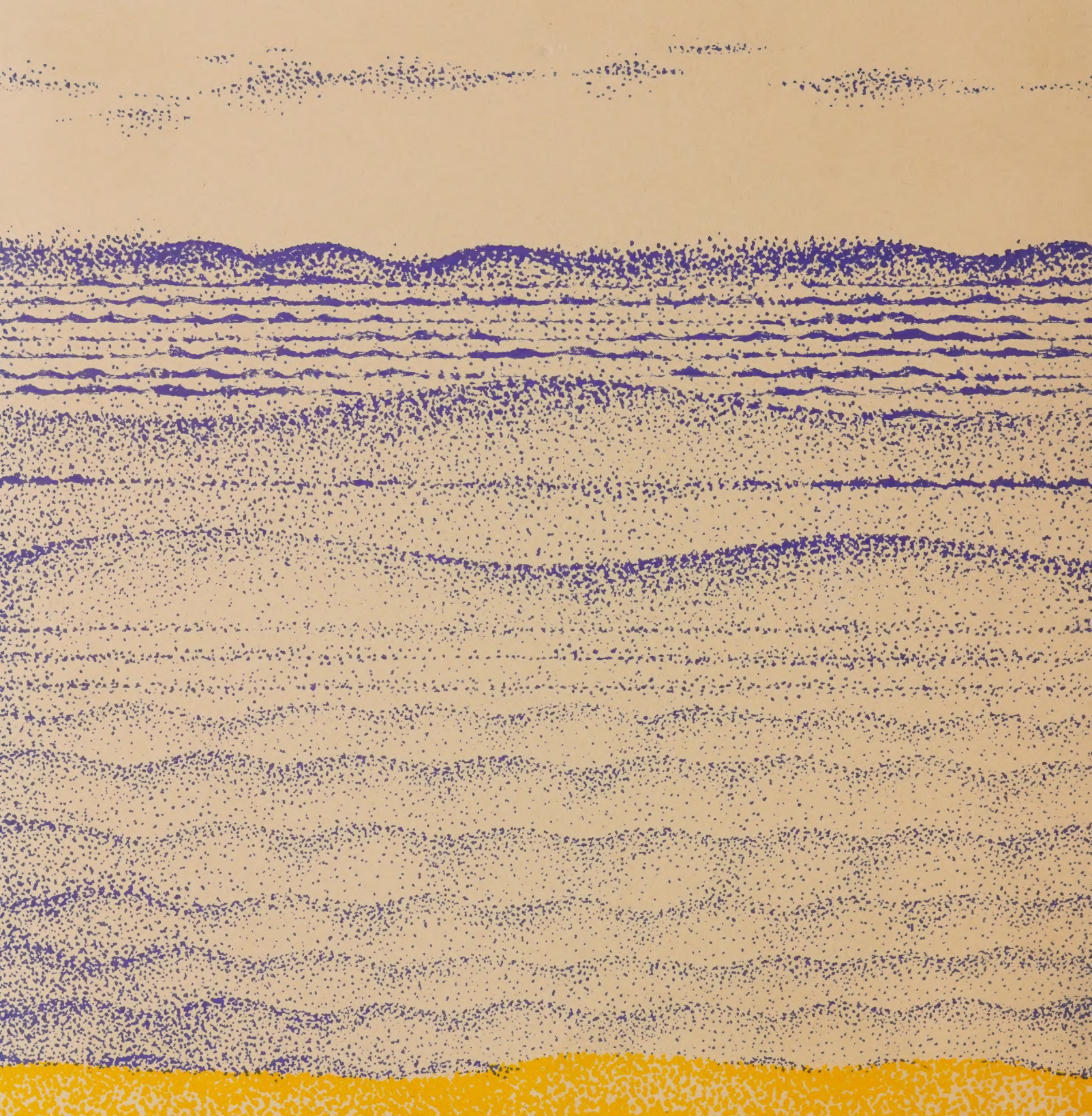
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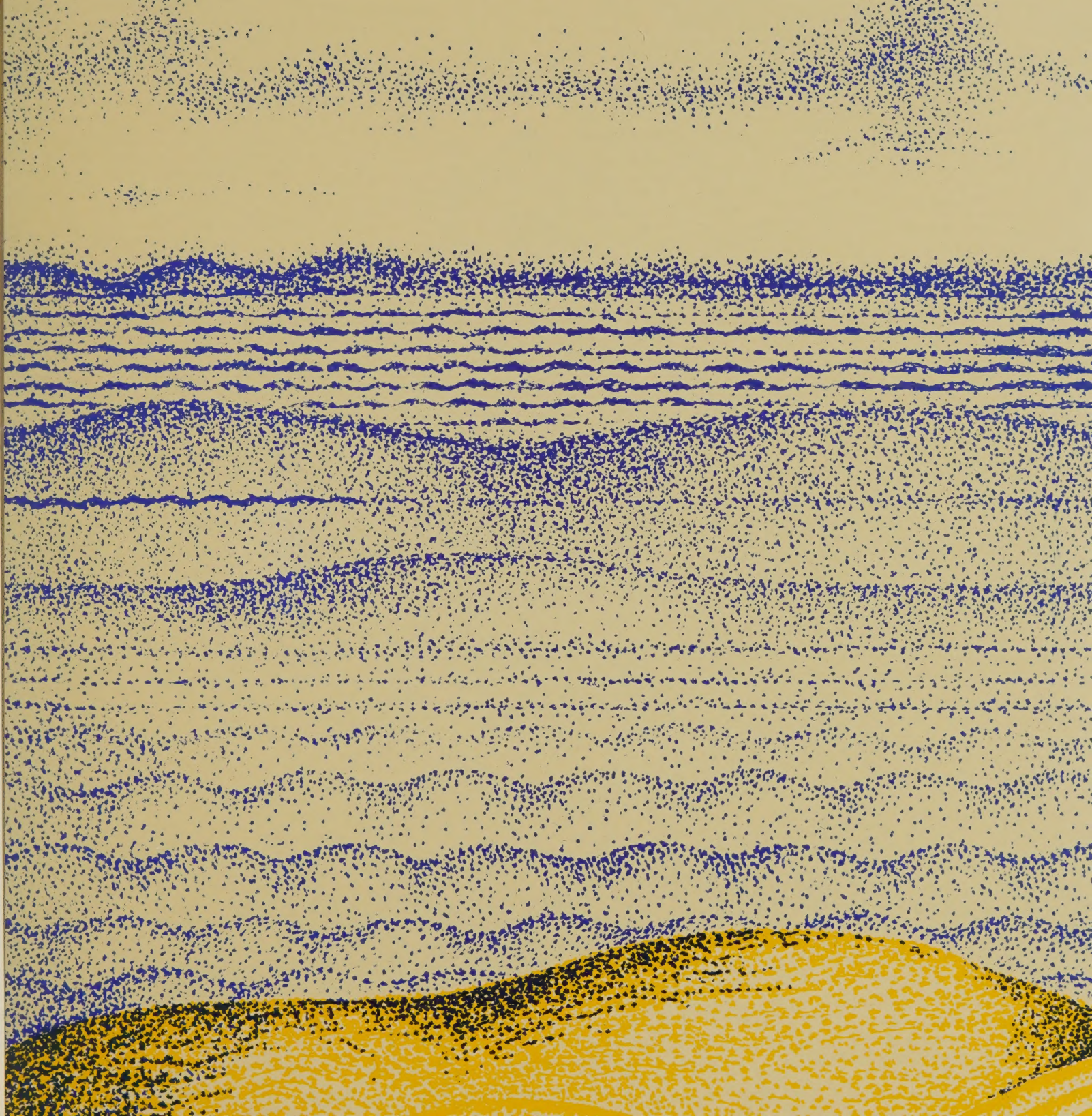
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